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8 comprises screw fasteners extending axially along an axis of
9 said driving shaft.

REMARKS

This is an amendment in response to the new ground of rejection under 37 C.F.R. § 1.196(b) made by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences in their decision mailed January 5, 1994 (Paper No. 26, page 15, lines 8 to 11). Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 11 to 16 and 18 were pending at the time of the decision by the Board. This response amends claim 11 and adds new claims 19 to 26. Claims 12 and 13 depend upon claim 11. The remaining claims (i.e., claims 14 to 16 and 18) have been retained for reconsideration by the Board in the event a further appeal is taken in this case. Thus, claims 11 to 13 and 19 to 26 remain for the Examiner's consideration.

In the decision mailed January 5, 1994, the Board affirmed, inter alia, a rejection of claims 11 to 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Numata (Japanese Publ. 57-058542). The Board designated their affirmance as a new ground of rejection in view of a different interpretation of the Numata reference and the alleged prior art admissions in the applicants' specification. Accordingly, applicants are entitled to amend the claims and add

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new claims under 37 C.F.R. § 1.196(b)(1) to avoid the new grounds of rejection put forth by the Board.

Claim 11 has been amended to require a "reinforcing member" (element 4 in Fig. 1) which reinforces the elastic plate (2) and delimits axial movement of the flywheel body (5). As amended, claim 11 recites:

wherein each of said elastic plate, said flywheel body and said reinforcing member comprises a first portion, said first portion of said flywheel body being placed axially between said first portions of said elastic plate and said reinforcing member, and said first portion of said flywheel body being axially movable between said first portions of said elastic plate and said reinforcing member.

This structure is not taught or suggested by the Numata '542 reference. In rejecting the claims, the Board construed the plate member 24 of Numata '542 as the claimed reinforcing member. The plate member 24, however, does not provide a teaching of the structure now set forth in claim 11. The flywheel body 9 of Numata '542 does not have a first portion "placed axially between" and "axially movable between" first portions of the elastic plate 3 and the plate member 24. Instead, the plate member 24 of Numata '542 is disposed entirely on an opposite side of the elastic plate 3 from the flywheel body 9.

The newly cited Japanese Publication 63-190639 shows a flywheel assembly in Fig. 1 having a crankshaft 1, a flexible plate 2, a flywheel body 4, and a spacer 20. In this reference, the spacer 20 is somewhat similar to the reinforcing member 4 of

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the present invention. The spacer 20 has an outward flange 20a at the right end as viewed in Fig. 1, and a C-ring 21 as a stopper. Axial movement of the inner peripheral portion of the flywheel body 4 is limited by the outward flange 20a on the right side and the stopper ring 21 on the left side. The '639 reference fails to teach a flywheel assembly in which a flywheel body is axially movable between a first portion of an elastic plate and a first portion of a reinforcing member. Axial movement of the flywheel body 4 of the '639 reference is limited by the stopper ring 21, not by the flexible plate 2. Thus, claims 11 to 13, as amended, are also allowable over the '639 reference.

New claims 19 to 26 have been added to further define applicants' invention over the prior art applied by the Board. These claims are allowable for at least the reasons explained above regarding claims 11 to 13. In addition, claims 19 to 26 define the structure of applicants' flywheel assembly with additional specificity which clearly avoids the prior art of record.

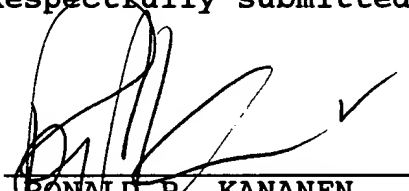
For at least the foregoing reasons, applicants submit that all of the instant claims are in condition for allowance. Early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

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If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this case in even better form, he is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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